Amelia Smith

Wiki Post #4

12/30/11

*Kaffir Boy*

By: Mark Mathabane

Summary:  
 In this section of the book Mark has become completely immersed in tennis. To him, tennis and school are the two most important things. His father doesn’t agree with his ways and considers his son to be a failure. Mark continues to excel in school and was offered a scholarship to continue his schooling because of how well he did on testing. He also became the best tennis player in his school and could even beat his coach. He was then introduced to a white tennis ranch and they are impressed with him, so they let him play. He is also able to see Arthur Ashe play when he comes to South Africa, and he looks up to him as his role model. His mother has become obsessed with her new church and Mark finds it very strange, but he doesn’t listen to his mother trying to convince him of her beliefs.

Mark spends much of his time among the whites at the tennis ranch and he is able to see that not all white people are bad. However, that is not the view of the others back home. They think he is being a traitor by mingling with the whites and some of the members of his gang try to hurt him one day by ambushing him. He was also bewitched and his eyes swelled up because of the things that he was doing with the whites. He visited the witch doctor who informed him of this and it made him more cautious. Mark struggles between doing what society thinks is right for him and doing what he thinks will ultimately better his future. Mark knows that the only way he is going to make a future for himself is to study as hard as he can and do extremely well in school and also to mingle with the whites in hopes of someday making it to America.

In Alexandria protests begin when the black people are angered by the education system and the police deal with it harshly. They started killing people left and right, which only made them angrier. They burned down buildings and it became complete chaos. Mark felt that he should join in the rebellion in some way and fight for his country, but his neighbor tells him that there are many ways that intelligent people can be used to help the country. Eventually it dies down and the school reopens. Mark goes back to the ranch for the first time in two months and he tells the white people about what the blacks have been dealing with. He feels good about informing others and realizes that he can help make a difference.

Analysis:

This section of the book shows how Mark is making decisions to ultimately give himself a better life. It keeps getting harder and harder, but Mark hasn’t let go of his dreams. Even though Mark uses other people as role models, he’s trying to figure out what is going to work for himself and his life. It seems like this has been the main point of the book for the past several chapters, but I think we will start to see Mark making big life decisions in the coming chapters. One of his main goals is to make it to America and I have a feeling that through his efforts in tennis he’ll get a chance to play in America and it will open up a whole new world for him. I think he will use that as an opportunity to shed light on the apartheid in South Africa. Mark doesn’t just think about himself, he’s trying to make life better for everyone around him. When he is at the ranch telling the white people about what is going on in Africa, he talks with such stature and importance that the whites genuinely believe in him even though they are of a different race. When he is talking about what the intentions of the blacks are he says, “We simply want a country where race and colour don’t determine your place in the sun (pg. 275).” Mark isn’t one of those people that just think the blacks should slaughter the whites because of how they have treated them. He has an intelligent mind and he knows that things need to be dealt with civilly, and I think once he is able to reach America he is going to make a difference in the life of the blacks back in South Africa.

Application:

The objective to understand human roles and behavior is shown in various characters in the novel. Looking at Mark, he is someone that is always striving to be his best and is always looking out for others. He has progressed over the years and as he learns more about the harshness and cruelty of the life of blacks, he is determined to make a change. This trait is not seen in many people, but it’s what a lot of people strive to be or what they wish they could be like. So while it may seem like a common trait, and it may seem like a lot of people would think about wanting to make a change, in reality there are only a few that actually have the drive to do so. Another character that I see this in is Mark’s mother. She has worked so hard to provide for her children, even though her husband does nothing for the family. She never gave up hope and never stopped trying. This is a trait common among mothers, but not to the same extent of Mark’s mother. She has also started to have strong beliefs in her church and has fully dedicated herself to praising her god. This shows the aspects of human nature because even though there are many religions in the world, everyone reaches out to some kind of higher power for guidance.